

"GUARD YOUR HEART" SERIES

#4: "Our Hearts Must Be Broken"

INTRO:

Last Sunday the message was "The Heart Is Deceitful," based on Jeremiah 17:9, where God said through the prophet:

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

In that message I said:

- 1. The heart is deceitful to the extent that it has caused us to do very terribly wrong things. It is so deceitful that we can't fix it.*
- 2. Our hearts were created pure, good, and eternal, but sin destroyed all of that.*
- 3. We must give our hearts to God; He alone can make them pure, good, and eternal again.*

Today's message, "Our Hearts Must Be Broken," is born of Psalm 51, a Psalm of David, who was known as **"a man after God's own heart."** His words here are not the words of an atheist or pagan, but those of a believer – someone like us in many ways – not a terribly "bad" man – someone who really wanted to live right but struggled to keep a steadfast spirit. He says in verse 10:

***"Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me."***

I want **"a pure heart"** and **"a right spirit"** too. How about you?

Then, in verse 17 he says:

***"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God,
you will not despise."***

David recognizes that a **"pure heart"** and a **"right spirit"** do not come without a price. He had a very *impure* heart and a spirit that was anything but *right*.

God had replaced the disobedient Saul with young David, and he was an obedient and very successful king. But at the height of his success, he became careless in his personal responsibilities. He sent Joab out to lead his army when he himself should have led them. He allowed the lust of the flesh and his position of power to get the best of him and committed sexual immorality with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his commanders. To hide his sin, he plotted and schemed, but to no avail. He finally put Uriah in a position in battle that guaranteed he would be killed.

David thought he had successfully hidden his sin, but God let him know through the prophet Nathan that He was fully aware of all that he had done, and David sought forgiveness. This Psalm is, in a sense, David's journal in which he recounts his path to that forgiveness.

As we consider the Psalm, we can determine the steps David took...

First,

HE ACKNOWLEDGED GOD.

Verses 1 and 2: **"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."**

He acknowledged God's authority over him and that he was accountable to God, so he puts himself at His mercy.

This is where it all has to start. Hebrews 11:6 tells us: **"without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."**

He acknowledged God's "unfailing love."

John 3:16 tells us, **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..."**

He acknowledged God's power and willingness to forgive.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:7: **"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace..."**

We, too, must acknowledge God and seek His mercy in such a way if we are to experience the blessing of a pure heart and a right spirit.

Second,

HE ACKNOWLEDGED HIS SIN.

Verses 3 through 6: **"For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inner being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart."**

He took responsibility for his sin.

He didn't try to blame it on someone or something else. When God confronted Adam in the garden after he and Eve had eaten from the forbidden tree, Adam said, **"The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."** Then Eve piped up, **"The serpent deceived me, and I ate"** (Genesis 3:12-13). James says that sin occurs when we are, by our **"lured and enticed by (our) own desire"** (1:14).

He acknowledged that his sin was against God.

He said, **"Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight."** When we violate God's laws, we are guilty of sin, and we will answer to Him for what we have done.

Our society tries to tell us that it's not sinful to break God's laws if man's laws say it's legal. For example, abortion (or the murder of an innocent unborn child) is seen by many as not sinful because man's law says it is legal – that it is a woman's right – that it is simply a woman exercising the freedom to control her own body. However,

while it may not be considered a sin against society, it is certainly a sin against God.

Another example: Man's laws permit sexual relations between consenting adults, whether they are married to each other or not. Therefore, in the minds of many, sexual immorality is okay, but it isn't, because it's in violation of the law of God.

The same applies to homosexuality and same- sex marriage. It's a sin against God, regardless of how many states pass laws permitting it!

David admitted that he had been sinful all his life.

He said, "**Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**" This has been a somewhat troubling statement. Did he mean that he was a sinner from the moment of conception? Some have taken it this way. That's why some Christians believe babies should be baptized. Catholicism teaches this. But that violates the biblical principles regarding baptism. Baptism is the immersion in water of a penitent believer in Christ. Babies and young children are incapable of such a response, and there's no biblical provision for one person believing and repenting for another, as in a parent believing and repenting for a baby or a child.

Let me offer an explanation. We would probably say it this way: "I've been a sinner all my life. I can't remember when I wasn't a sinner."

You see, we are born with a carnality that eventually influences us to sin. The point at which we become sinners is what we refer to as "an age of accountability." It is at that point that we may become candidates for baptism into Christ.

And please note that, after we profess faith in Christ, repent of our sins, and are baptized, we don't go get baptized again every time we sin. We just go to the Lord in prayer. John says to Christians, "**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness**" (1 John 1:9).

Third,

DAVID ASKED FOR FORGIVENESS.

Verses 7-9: **"Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities."**

He saw his sin as uncleanness – as filth – as spiritual leprosy, if you please.

According to the law of Moses, when a leper was healed of his leprosy, he would undergo a ritual of cleansing in which the hyssop plant was used (Leviticus 14:4,8). David saw his sin as a *spiritual leprosy* that only God could heal.

He asked God to take away the sin that kept him from enjoying His fellowship.

Isaiah 59:2 says: **"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, or his ear dull that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he does not hear."**

Jeremiah 31:34 prophesied of the time the Messiah would come: **"...I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more."**

Fourth,

HE ASKED GOD TO RESTORE HIS JOY OF SALVATION.

Verses 10-12: **"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit."**

His heart was contaminated with the impurities of sin.

It was like gold with dross. It was like fine clothing that had been soiled. David knew that only God could purify it.

He had lost the joy of salvation.

He had not lost his soul, but he was not joyful, because he knew he had not behaved the way the Lord wanted him to.

Haven't you felt like that? Have you ever lost the joy of your salvation? I certainly have. You're on your way to heaven, but you're down in the dumps!

Fifth,

HE RECOGNIZED HIS NEED TO REPENT AND CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF HIS LIFE.

Verses 13-17: ***"Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."***

David renewed his commitment to God.

You might say, "He rededicated his life to God." Yet even though he was confident of God's forgiveness, he couldn't get Uriah's blood off his hands.

I can identify with that. Can you? I can't seem to erase the memory of my most besetting sins. The "Uriahs" of my past just won't go away. Perhaps God uses them to keep me humble...

He recognized that there was nothing he could offer God that would please Him more than his own broken and contrite heart.

The sacrificial system under the Law of Moses made no provision for any offering that would atone for willful, deliberate sins, such as David committed. No amount of burnt offerings could make up for his failings. Nothing but his surrendered life would do.

It's the same with us. We can give tithes and offerings out the gazoo. We can volunteer for everything. We can keep a perfect attendance record intact. But none of these things can make up for our shortcomings. It's our surrender to His will that God wants. He wants a broken and contrite heart that is ready to serve Him!

CONCLUSION:

David closes the psalm with a plea for God to **"build up the walls of Jerusalem"** so that there will be **"right sacrifices"** and **"whole burnt offerings"** and **"bulls...offered..."** Since David had captured the city from the Jebusites and strengthened its fortifications, we have to take this as a plea for God to make sure Jerusalem wasn't devastated because of the sins of Israel's king.

Sometimes the sins of a leader can devastate a nation... or a church...